DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3500.37B

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: NAVY LESSONS LEARNED SYSTEM (NLLS)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5401.6K
        (b) COMNAVDOCCOM ltr 5000 Ser 00/269 of 29 Apr 94 (TAC
             D&E Management Guide) (NOTAL)
        (c) Joint Pub 1-03.30 of 15 Apr 91

Encl: (1) Lessons Learned Written Submission Format

1. <u>Purpose</u>. To revise and update the Navy Lessons Learned
System (NLLS) procedures for the submission, validation and
distribution of maritime-specific lessons learned and implement
the NLLS Remedial Action Program (RAP). This instruction is a
substantial revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. <u>Cancellation</u>. OPNAVINST 3500.37A.

3. <u>Background</u>. The Navy Lessons Learned System was established
in late 1991. Before that, no formalized methodology for
collecting and distributing lessons learned existed within the
fleet. NLLS has proven to be a useful tool to fleet users,
however, the initial focus was limited exclusively to operational
issues that had proposed workarounds. This policy excluded
substantial information in other areas during fleet operations
and exercises.

To reduce the recurrence of common problems and deficiencies, the
system will now include issues for which solutions have not yet
been proposed. Additionally, a Remedial Action Program (RAP)
will be implemented which will identify and track actions to
correct a deficiency or shortcoming in existing policy,
organization, training, education, equipment, or doctrine.

4. <u>Program Definition and Objectives</u>. The following
definitions and objectives govern the design and operation of the
NLLS.

    a. <u>Definition.</u> A lesson learned is information expressly
and specifically contributing to the value of the Navy's
established body of knowledge. To qualify as a lesson learned,
an item must reflect "value added" to existing policy,
organization, training, education, equipment or doctrine such as,
but not limited to, one or more of the following:

(1) Identify problem areas, issues, or requirements and, if known, suggested resolutions.

(2) Identify the need for specific, assignable, and accountable action on the part of a cognizant Navy command to create, update, modify, clarify, or cancel a portion of or an entire tactic, procedure, system, general information document (e.g., theater operating directives, pre-deployment preparation requirements), etc. with regard to existing policy, organization, training, education, equipment, or doctrine.

(3) Modify existing or experimental policy or doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

(4) Provide information of general or specific interest in operations planning and execution, (e.g., scheduling considerations, procedure/system checklists, etc.).

Restating or paraphrasing existing doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, etc., or merely providing the results of an operation/exercise do not qualify as appropriate and bona fide lessons learned.

   b. Objectives

(1) Provide the Navy with a low-cost database system to collate, evaluate and disseminate Navy-specific lessons learned.

(2) Provide a responsive method for identifying deficiencies and initiating corrective action in the areas of policy, organization, training, education, equipment, doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

5. Program Elements. The following elements are established to accomplish the objectives of the Navy Lessons Learned System (NLLS):

   a. Organization

(1) Fleet User. Individual ships, squadrons, operational units, training/educational facilities, and commands which generate and use lessons learned.

(2) Fleet Management Sites. Fleet Commanders in Chief (FLTCINCs), Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR), and Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT) or their designated representatives are the NLLS Management Sites. As such, they are responsible for NLLS

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processing for their respective area of responsibility (AOR), maintaining component parts of the Navy Lessons Learned Database (NLLDB), and forwarding lessons learned to the Navy Tactical Support Activity Central Site for input to the NLLDB. Management Sites also exercise primary quality control on the NLLS, ensure inputs are correctly made, validate new lessons learned, and review the database for currency and adequacy. The Management Sites have approval authority for all lessons learned entered into the NLLDB within their respective AORs.

(3) <u>Subject matter experts (SME)</u>. Major commands, type commanders, fleet commanders, warfare centers and tactical development centers (e.g., Surface Warfare Development Group, Naval Strike Warfare Center, Navy Fighter Weapons School, Submarine Development Squadron TWELVE, Carrier Airborne Early Weapons School, Commander, Mine Warfare Command, Tactical Training Group Atlantic/Pacific, Command and Control Warfare Groups, Coast Guard Commandant (G-RER, etc.) will provide support by reviewing and providing comments within their respective fields of expertise as requested.

(4) <u>Program Administrator</u>. Navy Tactical Support Activity (NAVTACSUPPACT) is the Collection and Distribution Center (Central Site), responsible for database management and distribution. Additionally, NAVTACSUPPACT will provide NLLS software development, training, and technical support.

(5) <u>Program Director</u>. Commander, Naval Doctrine Command (NDC), is the NLLS Program Director and shall ensure that the direction, policy, and procedures established by the NLLS Steering Committee are followed and accomplished.

(6) <u>NLLS Steering Committee</u>. The NLLS Steering Committee is responsible for overall NLLS policy and procedures. The committee will meet annually to discuss issues and formulate NLLS policy, procedures, and guidelines. The committee is chaired by Naval Doctrine Command and includes representatives from Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT), Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT), Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR), Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT), and numbered fleet commanders as members. Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Navy Tactical Support Activity are non-voting Steering Committee members.

(7) <u>Management Site Remedial Action Program (RAP) Working Group</u>. Subject matter experts within Management Site staffs who are responsible for initiating and coordinating actions to resolve assigned RAP items.

6. Actions and Responsibilities. In addition to those responsibilities inherent in program policy, the following organizations have responsibility for development and evaluation of information within the NLLS:

a. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) - Resource sponsor for Navy Lessons Learned System Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations, (N09B).

b. Naval Doctrine Command

(1) Act as Program Director for Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).

(2) Chair and participate as a voting member of the NLLS Steering Committee, act as recorder, and direct the administrative functions of the committee.

(3) Establish and implement procedures to support the NLLS database for general distribution throughout the Navy.

(4) Exercise Navy cognizance over accessing, exchanging and distributing information to lessons learned systems outside the Navy.

c. FLTCINCs, CINCUSNAVEUR, and COMUSNAVCENT

(1) Act as NLLS Management Sites for CNO.

(2) Implement policy/procedures throughout the fleet as recommended by the program director.

(3) Ensure lessons learned are submitted in the correct format and suitable for inclusion into the database.

(4) Assign appropriate keywords and other required information for each submitted lesson learned.

(5) Include appropriate remarks on specific actions taken to resolve a lesson learned issue in the COMMENTS section of the item.

(6) If a lesson addresses a subject that requires additional staffing outside the Management Site, they should task the appropriate subject matter expert to review the lesson and provide appropriate comment.

(7) As required, originate lessons learned.

(8) Exercise final approval authority of all lessons contained in the NLLDB that are generated via the chain of command within their AOR.

(9) Conduct, at a minimum, an annual review of lessons previously validated by the site. This review should be continuous and automatic in that an item that is reviewed at the annual date of entry into the database will be automatically expunged after 2 years unless revalidated by the Management Site. All expunged lessons learned are archived and may be reviewed on the NTIC Series A in the **NLLSARCH** file.

(10) Resolve submissions of conflicting/duplicate entries.

(11) Establish a RAP Working Group which will:

(a) Review potential deficiencies, define problems, and develop plans for resolution.

(b) Designate action to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR).

(c) Provide progress reports for incorporation into NLLDB.

(d) Determine transfer or closure of RAP items.

(12) Participate as voting members of the NLLS Steering Committee.

d. **NAVTACSUPPACT**

(1) Act as NLLS Program Administrator for CNO.

(2) Responsible for development, implementation, operation, maintenance, training, and overall administrative management of the system.

(3) Coordinate with Joint Staff (J-7 EAD) and other Services to ensure compatibility between the NLLS and joint or Service-specific lessons learned systems.

(4) Collect lessons learned from each NLLS Management Site; ensure consistency of terminology between submitting agencies.

(5) Distribute the updated database.

(6) Maintain and develop system hardware, software, and documentation.

(7) Provide technical operations and training support.

(8) Maintain standard data dictionaries.

(9) Ensure that duplicate or conflicting entries are brought to the attention of appropriate Management Sites.

(10) Assist the program director and Management Sites in implementing policy/procedures throughout the Fleet.

(11) Participate as a non-voting member of the NLLS Steering Committee.

e. Numbered Fleet Commanders. Participate as voting members of the NLLS Steering Committee.

f. All NLLS Users

(1) Lessons learned can be originated by any fleet user, Management Site or other command/activity using the Navy Instructional Input Program (NIIP) software. NIIP is further discussed in paragraph 8.

(2) Lessons shall be forwarded for approval and inclusion in the database via the originator's Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) to the appropriate Management Site based on the AOR in which the lessons occurred. If the lesson learned is submitted via the naval message system (using NIIP format), each activity in the operational chain of command and the appropriate Management Site shall be an info addressee. If the lesson learned is submitted by letter, the fleet user shall submit it via its ISIC and send a copy to the appropriate Management Site for tracking purposes. ISICs at each level shall expedite review/comment and forward the lesson to the next echelon within 14 days from receipt, unless otherwise stated in the operation/exercise Letter of Instruction (LOI). Additionally, each ISIC in the chain of command shall send a copy of its endorsement to each command listed on the basic letter/message. For major fleet operations and exercises, the Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) or Officer Conducting the Exercise (OCE) shall consolidate lessons learned received via ISICs from participating units, review the lessons to eliminate inappropriate items (i.e., invalid data, duplicates, conflicting entries, etc.) and forward approved lessons in a timely manner to the applicable Management Site for input to the NLLDB. In cases where the OTC/OCE is a type commander, numbered fleet commander, or technical Subject Matter Expert (SME), the Management Site may consider these lessons as valid lessons learned.

(3) If a graphic illustration (picture, chart, graph) exists which expands on information contained within a particular lesson learned, it should be forwarded in hardcopy format.

(4) Parallel Submission. If lessons learned are submitted via a joint command for entering into the JULLS system, the originating command shall forward duplicates of the items to the appropriate Management Site. This will ensure that lessons are made available with minimum delay for Navy-wide use.

7. Program Concepts and Relationships

a. Primary User. The primary NLLS user and beneficiary is the individual fleet unit. The NLLS provides the operator information which applies directly to fleet operations: problems noted, system performance, workarounds, and observations that others have found useful. Data retrieval does not require extensive training and the data can be accessed using standard Personal Computers (PCs). On-screen searches can be conducted in seconds and hard copy of a specific lesson can be printed for further use. The overall purpose of the system is to provide the user with a fast source of current information, validated by platform and warfare area experts, which can support fleet operations. It is designed to be user friendly, to be interoperable with other deployed systems, and to simplify the process of submitting lessons learned.

b. Equipment. The NLLS is a PC-based system, using any IBM compatible PC with 550K available RAM, an ISO 9660 CD-ROM drive with Microsoft CD-ROM DOS extensions, MS/PC DOS 3.0 or higher, and 1.2 megabytes of available hard disk, floppy disk, or ram disk.

c. Database. The NLLDB contains lessons learned information and current status on lessons learned material classified up to and including Secret Noforn (the entire NLLDB is contained on a classified disk; unclassified lessons learned are also contained on a separate unclassified disk). Both the NLLDB and Navy Instructional Input Program (NIIP) are distributed on the Navy Tactical Information Compendium (NTIC) Series A CD-ROM. All fleet units should be on distribution. For additional information, commands should contact the Navy Tactical Support Activity at DSN 288-3678 or commercial (202)433-3678.

d. Relation to Tactical Development and Evaluation (TAC D&E). References (a) and (b) discuss the TAC D&E program in detail. NLLS supports the TAC D&E program by providing tactical lessons learned for possible development into Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) in the NWP system.

e. <u>Relation to Joint Systems</u>. The NLLS is not a replacement for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) sponsored Joint After Action Reporting System (JAARS) established by reference (c), which includes submission of lessons to the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS). The JAARS/JULLS system was established primarily to identify areas of Joint concern that require some form of corrective action (usually by senior staffs) and to ensure that requisite remedial programs are established. If the subject matter is a single Service concern, it will not normally be tracked in JULLS. The NLLS, on the other hand, is concerned with sharing maritime operational information and allows naval units to benefit from others' experiences. The two systems therefore serve different functions, but complement each other. Lessons learned that affect both joint and Navy issues do not require the lessons to be written twice; Management Sites have the capability to download Navy lessons learned to the JULLS file network.

f. <u>Allied Navy Participation</u>. The NLLDB is not available to naval forces of U.S. allies, however, the NIIP program may be provided to, and used by them to submit lessons learned to a U.S. operational or exercise commander for inclusion in the NLLDB. In the event that an allied source is unable to use the NIIP, "Lessons Learned Written Submission Format" as prescribed in enclosure (1) may be used.

8. <u>Input Program</u>

a. Lessons learned are created with a software input program called the Navy Instructional Input Program (NIIP). NIIP complies with both Navy and JCS after action reporting requirements and is the preferred single software program for submitting Navy lessons learned to all current lessons learned databases (NLLDB, JULLS, etc.).

b. NIIP replaces JULLS software and shall be used by all Navy commands in operational or administrative situations to submit lessons learned, including those on Joint issues that are submitted to JULLS.

c. NIIP generated lessons learned may be submitted by mail or by United States Message Text Format (USMTF) GENADMIN message, using the message generation menu option available in the NIIP program.

d. The NIIP program is available on the NTIC Series A CD-ROM or at any Management Site.

9. <u>RAP</u>

a. <u>Information Flow Within RAP</u>. Lessons learned that reflect a deficiency should be addressed through the RAP. The RAP is a deficiency or shortcoming in existing policy, organization, training, education, equipment, or doctrine which requires action to correct and this program establishes procedures to overcome that deficiency. Specific RAP objectives are to:

(1) Identify impediments to US Navy fleet operations and force capability.

(2) Assign responsibility for corrective action.

(3) Review and track status of corrective actions taken to solve these problems.

The RAP will function in a continuous cycle of input, analysis, corrective action, monitoring and feedback to the NLLS user. This cycle will identify remedial action items through the analysis of a lesson learned, assign an OPR to develop possible courses of action, monitor the progress of corrective action, and close the Remedial Action item when the solution has been implemented or moved to an archive status.

The Fleet CINCs, CINCUSNAVEUR, and COMUSNAVCENT are responsible for management and administration of RAP items within their respective AORs. Items that cannot be resolved at the CINC/COMUSNAVCENT level (i.e., organize, train, or equip issues for the United States Navy or Department of the Navy) shall be referred to the CINCs Conference for resolution.

b. The flow of a lesson learned through the RAP system is as follows:

(1) A fleet user submits a lesson learned via its operational Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) to its respective Management Site for validation and inclusion into the NLLDB.

(2) The Management Site processes the lesson learned and categorizes it as a Noted Item (NI) or Remedial Action Program (RAP) Item by tagging the lesson in the COMMENTS field.

(a) A Noted Item is an item that already contains a proposed or demonstrated solution for the problem being identified, or is already being acted upon through an

existing program that is taking corrective action. Comments
about new or proposed procedures, tactics, techniques, etc.,
that worked well or did not work well belong in this category.

      (b) A Remedial Action Item is an item that requires
corrective action for resolution.

      <u>1</u>. If the item can be resolved at the Management
Site level, the RAP Working Group will assign action to an OPR
within the Management Site headquarters or to a subordinate
command. The Management Site will update the NLLDB on the status
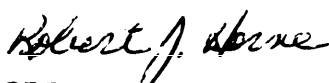of the remedial action.

      <u>2</u>. If an item cannot be resolved at the
Management Site level, the Management Site RAP Working Group will
forward the item to the CINC's Conference for resolution via the
CNO Executive Panel (N00K). If the item is accepted, CNO will
assign action to the applicable OPNAV code. CNO Executive Panel
(N00K) will track the action assigned, however, it is the
Management Site's responsibility to update the progress of the
item within the NLLDB. If the item is rejected by CNO, the
Management Site will note the reason and reassign or cancel the
RAP project as appropriate.

      <u>3</u>. For lessons learned that reflect a
tactical/procedural deficiency and require analytical support
(contractor/Navy laboratory), a project request should be
submitted through the chain of command for consideration by the
TAC D& E Steering Committee in accordance with references (a) and
(b).

      <u>4</u>. If the item appears to address a deficiency
which requires Coast Guard action to resolve, the Management Site
shall refer the item to the Coast Guard Subject Matter Expert,
Commandant (G-RER), for validation and comment. The item will be
resolved as a Coast Guard Universal Lessons Learned System
(CGULLS) item.

10. <u>Recommendations</u>. Recommendations concerning the NLLS should
be submitted to Commander, Naval Doctrine Command.

11. <u>Report</u>. The reporting requirement contained in paragraph 6
is exempt from reports control by SECNAVINST 5214.2B.

                            ROBERT J. HORNE
                            ASSISTANT VICE CHIEF
                            OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

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6.   Title:

7.   ( ) Observation:

8.   ( ) Discussion:

9.   ( ) Lesson Learned:

10.   ( ) Recommended Action:

11.   ( ) Comments: